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NEWS RELEASE

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Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announces that Alirio Reyes, also known as "Seco," an MS-13 gang member, pleaded guilty today, after two days of trial, to murder in aid of racketeering, before United States District Judge T. S. Ellis, III. Sentencing is scheduled for December 16, 2005. Reyes faces a mandatory life sentence.

The guilty plea stems from a shooting in Herndon, Virginia, on the night of May 16, 2004. Reyes and another MS-13 gang member, Heriberto Alfaro-Fuentes, also known as "Buso," confronted a male and female juvenile on Park Avenue in Herndon, Virginia, to determine if the boy was a rival gang member from the 18th Street gang. Reyes and Alfaro-Fuentes intended to kill at least the boy if they confirmed he was from the rival 18th Street gang. When they approached the juveniles, Alfaro-Fuentes lied to them, telling them he was a member of the 18th Street gang. When the juvenile male stated that he was also a member of this gang, Reyes shot at them at close range with a .38-caliber handgun, killing the 17-year-old juvenile male and seriously injuring the 16-year-old juvenile female. The juvenile victims did not know Reyes or Alfaro-Fuentes. After the shooting, Reyes and Alfaro-Fuentes fled Virginia and traveled to Los Angeles, California, where they were arrested on June 18 by members of the United States Marshals Fugitive Task Force in Los Angeles.

Mr. McNulty stated: The messages from this case are clear. The federal government will track down and prosecute violent gang criminals wherever they run, and membership in a violent gang is a one-way ticket to prison. This is the true cost of gang membership."

Reyes had been charged in an eight-count indictment with five counts of committing violent crimes in aid of racketeering, two counts of using a firearm during these violent acts, and fleeing the jurisdiction to avoid prosecution. Trial commenced on Tuesday, September 20, and after two days of testimony about the nature and structure of MS-13 and previous violent acts committed by the gang, Reyes chose to plead guilty to murder in aid of racketeering and admit his role in the May 16 shootings. During his plea, Reyes stated that he murdered the male juvenile and assaulted the female juvenile because of his membership in and loyalty to MS-13. He admitted that MS-13 gang members are required to attack rival gang members, and that once he learned the juvenile male was a member of a rival gang, he had no other choice than to shoot him. Several witnesses had previously testified at the trial that MS-13 gang members who kill rival gang members increase their status in the gang. After Reyes' plea was accepted by the court, the remaining charges against him were dismissed. Reyes' co-defendant, Alfaro-Fuentes,

pled guilty to murder in aid of racketeering on September 1, 2005. He will be sentenced on December 9, and also faces a mandatory life sentence.

Mr. McNulty further stated: “Reyes’ guilty plea comes as part of the first federal prosecution in the Eastern District of Virginia of MS-13 gang members using the federal racketeering criminal statutes. It is also part of the District’s anti-gang initiative, which is part of a coordinated effort between federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecuting agencies to combat gang crime.”

Mr. McNulty praised the work of the Herndon Police Department; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force; the United States Marshals Service Capital Area Regional Fugitive Task Force, and the Fairfax County Police Department.

The case was prosecuted for the United States by Assistant United States Attorneys Patrick Stokes and Morris Parker.

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